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ABSTRACT

In response to this survey, recent graduates of the Criminal Justice program at Sam Houston State University (Texas) evaluated both the University and the College of Criminal Justice highly. The research team received 277 completed responses from the 762 questionnaires distributed to all 1988, 1990, and 1992 recipients of baccalaureate degrees in criminal justice (36%). On balance, respondents were satisfied with their education and believed it prepared them well for work. Women, younger respondents, and those who have remained in Texas are more positive about their experience at the College and the University. The final report shows five areas to focus on for improvement: (1) computer literacy and mathematical skills, where some respondents felt less prepared; (2) the requirements of the global market place as a response to the needs of students who will live or work outside Texas; (3) alumni outreach, because few respondents remained involved with the University after graduation; (4) expanded job placement and career counseling services; and (5) increased attention to the needs of older (35+) non-traditional students who were less satisfied with their experience in the College and the University than younger students. The report also provides a copy of the original survey. (LH)

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ED 394 862

SURVEY OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AT SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Final Report

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and

Matthew F. Foster

CRIMINAL JUSTICE 1965 CENTER 1995
Education for Public Service

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Sam Houston State University

College of Criminal Justice

Huntsville, TX 77341-2296

April 17, 1995

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Office of Undergraduate Studies at the College of Criminal Justice surveyed all 1988, 1990 and 1992 recipients of baccalaureate degrees in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University.
- Of the 762 questionnaires distributed, 185 were returned by the postal service as undeliverable. Of the remaining 577 graduates, 277 completed the survey. The response rate for deliverable questionnaires was 48.0 percent.
- Graduates of the criminal justice program evaluate both the University and the College of Criminal Justice very highly. On balance, they are satisfied with the education they received and believe that it prepared them well for their current work situation.
- There are substantial differences between certain demographic categories of respondents in the level of satisfaction they expressed concerning their experiences at SHSU. Women are somewhat more satisfied with their experiences than are men. Younger respondents (less than 35) are much more impressed with the programs at SHSU (and the College of Criminal Justice) and feel much better prepared than older students (35 and over). The same holds true for currently single students. Finally, students who moved to other states after graduation tend to be more critical of their experiences at SHSU than graduates who stayed in Texas.
- Women are more likely to have completed an internship than men. Men and non-whites tend to have participated in more campus activities than their counterparts and are also more likely to intend to pursue additional education.
- The quality of preparation in computer literacy and mathematical skills was rated lower by respondents than preparation in other skills.
- About one-half (53%) of the respondents served an internship as part of their undergraduate degree programs. Respondents indicate that the internship was of great help in securing their first employment: 21% learned of their first job in this manner. Of

these individuals, 71% were hired by their internship agency. Even of those who were not, 91% believed their internship experience helped them in locating their first job. Internship experience led to a first job more often for women than for men.

- Respondents indicate that the College of Criminal Justice should provide more "real world" experience and should also put more emphasis on job placement and career counseling services.
- Most graduates in the survey have been only minimally involved in the University and the College since leaving the campus. Few are involved in the Alumni Association and most have little information concerning current University or College events, but a sizable majority state that they would enjoy more contact.
- This survey reveals that the University should place more emphasis on teaching computer and mathematical skills, that it should have a better outreach program for alumni, and that it should consider the needs of the national economy to a greater extent. The College of Criminal Justice is justified in its current efforts to expand its job placement and career counseling services, but should focus more on the needs of non-traditional students.

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Undergraduate Studies conducted a survey of recent graduates of the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) during the fall semester of 1994. The goal was to learn about former students' assessment of their experiences while at SHSU, their employment experiences since graduation, their evaluation of how SHSU prepared them for the work environment, and the nature and extent of their interaction with SHSU since graduation. A questionnaire was designed to collect information on 76 variables (see Appendix A). This document is the final report of this survey.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The survey examined all students who received baccalaureate degrees in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University in 1988, 1990, and 1992. According to the University Registrar's records, there were 794 graduates during those years. Postcards informing the graduates of the survey were sent to these individuals at their permanent addresses listed in the Registrar's records. The postal service returned 32 of these cards as undeliverable, and those graduates were removed from the survey prior to the mailing of the questionnaires.

Distribution of the Mail Questionnaire

Permanent addresses in the Registrar's records may be changed only through a student's written request, and because it was assumed that few students who had moved had corrected their permanent addresses after graduation, preference was given to the

records of the Alumni Association. Members of the Alumni Association renew their memberships annually, and mailing addresses were therefore assumed to be more recent than addresses listed in the Registrar's records. However, membership in the Criminal Justice Alumni Association (at least for those who graduated in the selected years) is low, and only 13 addresses from the Registrar's records were replaced with Alumni Association addresses.

The pre-survey postcards were sent two weeks prior to the mailing of the questionnaire booklet. The nine-page booklet was sent in an envelope with a cover letter explaining the nature of the survey and assurances of confidentiality. A postage-paid envelope was also included. Subjects who did not respond within two weeks of the initial mailing were sent reminder postcards. Approximately 10 days after reminder cards were mailed, new questionnaires were sent to non-respondents, along with a new cover letter stressing the importance of the study in curriculum planning.

Sample

Of the 762 questionnaires distributed, 185 were returned by the postal service as undeliverable. This left the sample at 577 graduates, 277 of whom completed their questionnaires. Thus, the response rate for deliverable questionnaires was 48.0 percent.

Every survey researcher is concerned about the degree to which respondents are representative of the population under study. The College is fortunate in this respect, as it has some summary statistics from the Registrar's office concerning the study population, a luxury that survey researchers are not usually afforded.[1] The respondents are very representative of all graduates in criminal justice during 1988, 1990, and 1992. Exactly 61.4 percent of all graduates and respondents in our survey are male. Of all criminal justice graduates, 74.8 percent are non-Hispanic whites, while 79.2 percent of the survey

[1]Indeed, surveys are conducted precisely because the population parameters are unknown. Survey statistics are used to estimate population parameters.

respondents fall into this category. However, 16.5 percent of the graduates are listed by the Registrar as being at least 35 years old, but only 7.7 percent of the respondents are in that age group. This difference in percentages will be important in the following analysis, as age of respondents is one of the factors that affects responses.

Statistical Analysis

As is often the case, data were collected that are more detailed than can be presented in an elegant manner. For purposes of both presentation and analysis, answer categories were often collapsed. For instance, respondents who indicated that they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" were counted as "dissatisfied," while "very satisfied" or "satisfied" counted as "satisfied." Likewise, answers to the demographic questions were collapsed into a few categories. Age was collapsed into two categories: 35 and above (non-traditional students) and less than 35 (traditional students). Information on race and ethnicity was analyzed as whites and non-whites, while residence was divided between Texas and non-Texas.

Differences in answers between categories of respondents were tested for statistical significance. Depending on the nature of information sought, t-tests were used (for differences in means) and chi-square (for qualitative data) to determine statistical significance. A finding will be treated as statistically significant if there is less than a 5 percent chance that the observed differences are due to chance alone (the finding is said to be significant at the .05 level).[2]

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[2]As an entire population (all students who graduated during the three study years were surveyed) is included in this study, rather than only a sample thereof, it is technically unnecessary to conduct significance testing. However, as the three study years were arbitrarily selected, and with the relatively low response rate (48%), there is reason to question the statistical significance of observed differences between various categories of respondents. The use of statistical significance testing allows researchers to deal with this uncertainty.

FINDINGS

The questionnaire was divided into three substantive areas: (1) a series of questions concerning the respondents' experiences at Sam Houston State University, (2) questions addressing their employment histories, and (3) questions addressing their contacts with SHSU since graduation. For comparative purposes, a fourth section asked respondents about demographic information.

Experiences at SHSU

Criminal justice graduates are, in general, very complimentary in their assessment of their educational experiences at SHSU, in both the College of Criminal Justice and the University. More than 98 percent indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their education at SHSU and 92 percent with the availability of courses meeting general education requirements (see Table 1). The overall quality of instruction generated about 95 percent very satisfied and satisfied responses, and instructors were seen as easily accessible (90% of respondents were at least satisfied). However, there is a drop-off in the satisfaction concerning the helpfulness of faculty and staff in academic advising (82.7%) and assistance in career planning (62.9%).

Satisfaction levels among former students tend to be even higher for programs and services offered by the College of Criminal Justice. More than 96 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with respect to the criminal justice program in general, 91 percent with the variety of courses offered in criminal justice, 91 percent with the intellectual challenge CJ courses provided, 92 percent with the level of integration of CJ courses, and 97 percent with the quality of instruction in the College of Criminal Justice.

Almost 90 percent state they would definitely or probably attend SHSU again, and more than 91 percent rate the education they received at SHSU as important to their subsequent life experiences. With respect to specific skills, however, the University's preparation for the students varied in quality. More than 90 percent of the respondents state

that the university prepared them for their current educational or professional situation in verbal communication, written communication, social interaction, organizational skills, and reading skills. The percentages are lower for preparation in public speaking (79%), computer literacy (49%), cultural awareness (73%), and mathematical skills (53%). In fact, some respondents used an open-ended question concerning potentially beneficial services not offered while the student attended SHSU to express their support for more computer literacy and cultural awareness courses.

Table 1
Aggregated Data on Former Students' Experiences at SHSU

Issue	Percentage of Respondents Choosing "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"
Overall Impression of SHSU	98.2
Overall Impression of Criminal Justice	96.3
Course Variety in Criminal Justice	90.7
Course Availability at SHSU	92.1
Intellectual Challenge of Criminal Justice Courses	91.3
Integration of Criminal Justice Courses	92.4
Quality of Instruction in Criminal Justice	97.1
Quality of Instruction at SHSU	95.3
Accessibility of Instructors	89.8
Helpfulness of Staff in Academic Advising	82.7
Helpfulness of Staff in Assisting with Career Plans	62.9
Extent to which SHSU Prepared Respondents in Each of the Following:	**Percentage of Respondents Choosing "Somewhat Prepared" or "Well Prepared"**
Verbal Communication	91.6
Written Communication	91.1
Public Speaking	79.1
Social Interaction	91.4
Computer Literacy	45.7
Cultural Awareness	73.3
Organizational Skills	90.8
Mathematical Skills	53.3
Reading Skills	91.2

The respondents were not greatly involved in campus activities while they were attending SHSU. Seventy-four percent indicate that they either did not participate--or

participated less than once a month--in a social fraternity or sorority. Similar minimal or non-involvement rates were found for the fine arts (86%), religious organizations (83%), professional fraternities or sororities (64%), honorary organizations (85%), collegiate athletics (91%), service clubs (86%), student government (93%), and social action/political activities (93%). The only campus activities that led to extensive student participation included the use of the recreation center (only 33% did not use it or used it less than once a month), intramural athletics (54%), and attendance at athletic events (47%).

More than one-half of the respondents (53%) completed an internship as part of their undergraduate degree requirements, and 96 percent of these former students view their internship as either very or somewhat important to their educational experience. The most common settings for their internships were either a local probation or law enforcement agency (55%). Finally, only 27.5 percent indicate that a bachelor's degree is the highest degree that they intend to complete and about 50 percent want to pursue a master's degree.

Written comments. More than 50 percent of the graduates who returned questionnaires included written comments. While the comments were generally in line with the results of the structured questions, several issues generated particularly strong responses. Twenty-three alumni indicated that improved job placement and career counseling services would be beneficial for current and future students. Seven respondents reported that a stronger emphasis on "real world" faculty and curriculum was needed. One respondent, for instance, remarked that "[u]niversities ... create an environment that makes students believe that everything is O.K. in the real world. Sorry, but it is really dark out there."

Suggestions for additional courses to be offered in criminal justice followed a similar trend. Of the 31 respondents offering suggestions for classes, none involved courses focusing on theory. Computer literacy (9), commercial security (6), case management skills (5), agency interviewing skills (5), and major-specific Spanish (4) were the most common suggestions. Sixteen respondents supported some type of field training

component in their written responses, with the majority of those suggestions relating to small-group projects supervised by criminal justice practitioners. Among those who requested "hands-on experience," one assertion was typical: "Books are great, but real experiences cannot ever be beat!"

Demographic differences. Five questions were included in the survey that measured demographic characteristics: gender, age, marital status, race and ethnicity, and current residence. The year of graduation was included as an additional variable and thus information obtained from respondents could be compared in six different ways.

The analysis of differences in responses shows that several are statistically significant at the .05 level. Female graduates are somewhat more satisfied with the education they received than are males, although in most instances there are no statistically significant differences. However, women are more satisfied with the degree of helpfulness of faculty and staff in career planning, have a better overall impression of the criminal justice program, and feel criminal justice courses are integrated with each other, but men are more impressed with the instructional quality (see Table 2). Men are also more likely to have participated in intercollegiate athletics and intramural sports while attending SHSU. Also, men are more likely to seek an advanced college degree, but women are more likely to have served an internship as part of their undergraduate degree requirements.

Only four variables generated differences by race and ethnicity. Non-whites are more likely to have participated in fine arts activities and in religious organizations, and they are also statistically more likely to have attended intercollegiate athletic events. Non-whites are also more likely to plan to pursue an advanced college education than whites.

In terms of age, several significant differences were found. In general, older (35+), non-traditional students participated less in campus activities than younger students (less than 35), but the older students are also somewhat more critical in their assessments of the education they received at SHSU. Younger students are more favorably impressed by the overall quality of the criminal justice program and by course availability. They also

Table 2
Students' Experiences at SHSU:
Statistically Significant Differences by Respondent Categories

Category of Respondents who Rate Variable Higher	Variable	Statistic	Level of Significance
Women	Overall Impression CJ	t-test	.04
Women	CJ Course Integration	t-test	.03
Men	Instruction Quality at SHSU	t-test	.03
Women	Staff Help in Career Plans	t-test	.01
Men	Participation in Athletics	t-test	.02
Men	Participation in Intramural	t-test	.00
Women	Preparation in Organizational Skills	t-test	.00
Men	Highest Degree Sought	chi-square	.00
Women	Completed Internship	chi-square	.00
Non-whites	Participation in Fine Arts	t-test	.00
non-whites	Participation in Religious Orgs.	t-test	.00
Non-whites	Attended SHSU Athletics	t-test	.00
Non-whites	Highest Degree Sought	chi-square	.00
Young	Overall Impression CJ	t-test	.02
Young	Course Availability SHSU	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Social Frat./Sorority	t-test	.01
Young	Participation in Religious Orgs.	t-test	.00
Young	Use of Recreation Center	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Prof. Frat./Sorority	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Athletics	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Intramural	t-test	.00
Young	Attended SHSU Athletics	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Service Clubs	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Student Government	t-test	.00
Young	Participation in Social Action Groups	t-test	.00
Young	Preparation in Social Interaction	t-test	.04
Young	Preparation in Computer Literacy	t-test	.00
Young	Preparation in Mathematical Skills	t-test	.00
Young	Completed Internship	chi-square	.00
Single	Participation in Religious Orgs.	t-test	.02
Single	Participation in Honorary Orgs.	t-test	.01
Single	Participation in Intramural	t-test	.02
Single	Participation in Service Clubs	t-test	.02
Single	Participation in Social Action Groups	t-test	.00
Single	Highest Degree Sought	chi square	.00
Texas	Course Availability at SHSU	t-test	.01
Texas	Preparation in Written Communication	t-test	.00
Texas	Preparation in Computer Literacy	t-test	.03
Texas	Preparation in Organizational Skills	t-test	.02
Texas	Preparation in Reading Skills	t-test	.02

Table 2 (continued)

Category of Respondents who Rate Variable Higher	Variable	Statistic	Level of Significance
1988 (vs. 1992)	Staff Help in Career Plans	t-test	.00
1992 (vs. 1988)	Preparation in Computer Literacy	t-test	.00
1990 (vs. 1992)	Overall Impression of CJ	t-test	.00
1990 (vs. 1992)	CJ Course Variety	t-test	.01
1990 (vs. 1992)	Course Availability SHSU	t-test	.01
1990 (vs. 1992)	CJ Course Integration	t-test	.02
1990 (vs. 1992)	Instruction Quality in CJ	t-test	.00
1990 (vs. 1992)	Importance of SHSU Education	t-test	.01
1990 (vs. 1988)	Availability of Instructors	t-test	.04

feel better prepared by SHSU in terms of social interaction, computer literacy, and mathematical skills. Not surprisingly, younger students are much more likely to have participated in professional and social sororities and fraternities, religious organizations, intercollegiate and intramural athletics, service clubs, student governments, and social and political action groups. They are also more likely to have frequented the recreation center and athletic events. Finally, they are also more likely to have served an internship in the course of their undergraduate education.

Former students who are currently married are similar to older non-traditional students with regard to participation in campus activities. Compared to singles, they are less likely to have participated in religious organizations during their stay at SHSU. They are also less likely to have been members of honorary organizations, participated less in intramural, service clubs, and social and political action groups. Singles are also more likely to intend to pursue an advanced college education in the future.

There are also some differences between former students who still reside in Texas and those who moved to other states. Current Texas residents have more favorable attitudes about the quality of education they received at SHSU. For instance, they assess

the preparation they received in written communication, computer literacy, organizational skills, and reading skills higher than the graduates who live elsewhere.

Finally, there are some differences between the graduating classes. However, caution should be taken against reading too much into the observed differences. A total of 111 chi-squares and t-tests were run. With that many tests, and using a .05 level of significance, one would expect 5.5 tests to be statistically significant *by chance alone*: nine differences were found to be statistically significant (see Table 1). Nevertheless, there was a tendency for the earlier graduates to be more impressed and satisfied than graduates of later years. One exception to this rule was that the class of 1992 feels better prepared in computer literacy than the class of 1988. Given the improvements in computer resources on campus in recent years, this finding is not surprising.

Employment Experiences

More than 60 percent of the respondents found employment either before graduation or within 90 days following it. About one in five (21%) respondents learned about their first job through an internship, and 71 percent were hired by their internship agency. Of interns who were not hired by their agencies, 91 percent believed the internship experience helped them in securing their first job. About two-thirds of respondents who served an internship were hired within three months of completing it. Of those who did not learn about their first job through an internship, 27 percent were referred through a friend or relative, 20 percent through direct contact with their future employer, and 16 percent already worked there before graduation.

About one-half (53%) of the respondents indicate that their job at the time of the administration of the survey is no longer their first job after graduation. Direct employer contact (27.3%) and referral from a friend or relative (25.8%) are by far the most common means through which respondents learned about their current employment. About 80 percent of the respondents are employed in positions that are at least somewhat related to

the criminal justice education they received. Of those who are not, 34 percent indicate that they could not find any work in criminal justice, while about 19 percent list low pay in the field as the primary reason. The vast majority of respondents (nearly 93%) are employed full time and have salaries ranging between $20,000 and $35,000 (73% are in this range).

While former students are generally very satisfied with the education they received at SHSU, they are somewhat more critical with respect to the extent to which they felt prepared for the first job. About 70 percent indicate that the criminal justice program at SHSU provided them with an excellent or good preparation. Conversely, 23 rate it as only fair, while 7 percent see it as poor.

Demographic differences. There were only a few comparisons between demographic categories of respondents that produced statistically significant differences in answers. Women are more likely to have found their first job as a result of having served an internship. This finding is consistent with the fact that more women served internships as part of their education at SHSU. A second finding is that students who graduated in 1988 were much less likely to still be in their first position than were 1990 or 1992 graduates.

There were statistically significant differences in salaries between men and women, and by graduating classes. Men report higher earnings than women, 1988 graduates earn more than 1990 and 1992 (1990 more than 1992), and graduates who moved away from Texas earn more than Texas residents. Similarly, non-Texas residents who had served an internship took longer to find their first job than those who stayed in Texas. Graduates who moved to other states are also less likely to be employed in a field related to their criminal justice education than graduates who remained in Texas, and the same holds true for white respondents.

Contact with SHSU since Graduation

The respondents in this survey have not been involved with the University community to any great extent since leaving. Only about 10 percent are members of the Alumni Association, with another 19 percent indicating that they are former members. The reasons for this non-involvement vary. Only six individuals indicate that they had received a membership as a gift. Nearly 40 percent believe that the Alumni Association is for people older than they are, and 29 percent believe that SHSU is only interested in its successful professional graduates.

Former students feel ambivalent about contributing financially to the University. More than 37 percent indicate that they have not made a contribution because they believe that their donation would be too small to make any difference and 27 percent believe the University's endowment to be sufficient. At the same time, nearly 60 percent say they would make a donation if they received an account of how their gift was spent. However, two respondents comment that such an account would be a waste of donated money.

The respondents indicate that they are not well-informed of University activities, with 51 percent stating that they are not informed at all. Fully 34 percent say that they have no sources of information, while about one-sixth each receive information through the alumni newsletter or from current students. However, 72 percent say they would enjoy more contact with the University, and only 22 percent agree with the statement that SHSU is part of their past and they have no desire to maintain much contact.

Most students (72%) have never participated in an alumni event and a sizable minority (27%) have either never returned to the campus or have not done so in at least two years. At the same time, 85 percent say they would attend the university again if they had to choose again, and about 80 percent agree that the university had a major positive impact on their careers.

Demographic differences. There are only a few differences in responses to questions dealing with the interaction former students have with the University since their

Table 3
Contact with SHSU since Graduation:
Statistically Significant Differences by Respondent Categories

Category of Respondents who Rate Variable Higher	Variable	Statistic	Level of Significance
Whites	Would Enjoy More SHSU Contact	t-test	.02
Non-Whites	Participation in Alumni Events	t-test	.01
Texas	Recency of Last Visit to Campus	t-test	.00
Young	Endowment Is Sufficient	t-test	.01
Married	Would Attend SHSU Again	t-test	.03
Single	Level of Information about SHSU	t-test	.03
1988 (vs. 1990)	Level of Information about SHSU	t-test	.01
1988 (vs. 1992)	Level of Information about SHSU	t-test	.01
1992 (vs. 1988)	Recency of Last Visit to Campus	t-test	.01
1992 (vs. 1990)	Recency of Last Visit to Campus	t-test	.00
1988 and 1990	Former Member of Alumni Assoc.	chi-square	.00
1992	Current Sources of Info on SHSU	chi-square	.00

graduation (see Table 3). There are no statistically significant differences between men and women. White graduates are more likely than non-whites to indicate that they would enjoy more contact than they currently have, while non-whites are more likely to have participated in alumni activities. Younger graduates (less than 35 years old) are more likely to believe that the University is sufficiently endowed and thus not in need of more donations. Single graduates are less likely to state that they would attend the University again, while currently married graduates are less informed about SHSU events than are the singles. Students who moved to a different state following graduation have not returned to the campus for a statistically longer period of time than have graduates who have stayed in Texas.

Finally, there are a few differences between the graduating classes. Members of the classes of 1988 and 1990 are much more likely to state that they are former members of the Alumni Association than are 1992 graduates. Perhaps equally obvious, 1992 graduates are more likely to rely on current students, University publications, and faculty for information

than earlier classes. Also, 1992 graduates have visited the campus more recently than members of earlier graduating classes. Conversely, members of the class of 1988 tend to be better informed about current events at SHSU than 1990 and 1992 graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The alumni and alumnae are in general very satisfied with the education they received at Sam Houston State University and they are also pleased with the College of Criminal Justice. The vast majority would enroll in SHSU again if they had to choose again and they feel in general well-prepared for the careers they are currently pursuing. However, the survey also generated some conclusions that show room for improvement for both the University and the College. In particular, five areas of concern can be identified:

1. The respondents are concerned about the quality of preparation they received in computer literacy and mathematical skills. Given that the graduates of the class of 1992 rate the computer literacy variable higher than the 1988 graduates (significant at the .05 level), one can assume that the University has made progress in this area. Nevertheless, the importance of a quality education in mathematics and computer literacy is likely to increase in the future, and the University should be cognizant of such needs.
2. The University must be aware of the needs of the national economy as well. While only a few respondents have moved to other states following graduation from SHSU, they are consistently more critical of the quality of education they received. While it is true that the University's (and the College's) primary constituency is in Texas, the ever-increasing globalization of the economy mandates that there is an awareness of the needs elsewhere.
3. The graduates indicate that they have very minimal contact with both the University and the College but would enjoy more. More needs to be done to reach out to the

alumni. Doing so would not only be beneficial to them, but would probably also lead to more donations to the University and the College.

4. The graduates indicate that the College should provide more job placement and career counseling services than they had received during their studies. Current efforts by the Undergraduate Advisement Center to expand such services should be continued and intensified.

5. Older (35+), non-traditional students are consistently more critical than younger students of both the College and the University. Given that they are an ever-increasing percentage of the University's student body, in the future more attention should be paid to their needs. For instance, they tend to be much less involved in extracurricular college activities (e.g., intramurals), but instead are concerned about the nature and the quality of the educational programs offered. The changing demographic characteristics of the student population may thus necessitate a redistribution of resources in the future.

APPENDIX A

Survey questionnaire

Survey of the Alumni
College of Criminal Justice
Sam Houston State University
1994

Thank you for completing this survey.

We appreciate the dedication you show toward Sam Houston State University by taking the time to complete this survey. The survey's results will be an important part of the College of Criminal Justice's undergraduate curriculum planning. We value your opinion!

Please return the survey booklet in the enclosed postage-paid envelope as soon as possible.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Please check only one answer, except where otherwise noted.

1. When did you graduate from Sam Houston State University's College of Criminal Justice?

   ☐ 1988
   ☐ 1990
   ☐ 1992

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Section 1

First, we would like to ask you a few questions about your experience at SHSU.

1. Using your experiences at SHSU as a frame of reference, please respond to each of the following items. Use a one to four scale where 1 indicates very dissatisfied and 4 indicates very satisfied.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
	1	2	3	4
(1) Your overall impression of your education at SHSU	☐	☐	☐	☐
(2) Your overall impression of the criminal justice program at SHSU	☐	☐	☐	☐
(3) Variety of courses offered in criminal justice	☐	☐	☐	☐
(4) Ease of obtaining courses to meet general education requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
(5) The extent to which courses in criminal justice challenged you intellectually	☐	☐	☐	☐
(6) The extent to which courses in criminal justice were integrated with each other (related to each other, clarified concepts introduced in other courses, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
(7) The overall quality of instruction in criminal justice at SHSU	☐	☐	☐	☐
(8) The overall quality of instruction at Sam Houston State University	☐	☐	☐	☐
(9) The ease of meeting with instructors for conferences outside of class	☐	☐	☐	☐
(10) Helpfulness of faculty and staff in academic advising	☐	☐	☐	☐
(11) Helpfulness of faculty and staff in assisting you with occupational plans	☐	☐	☐	☐

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2. If you could start over again, would you still attend SHSU?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not
- ☐ Would not attend college

3. If you participated in any of the activities below while you were at SHSU, please indicate the extent of your involvement.

	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION				
	Did not participate	Less than once per month	About once a month	Two to four times per month	More than four times per month
(1) Social fraternity or sorority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(2) Professional fraternity or sorority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(3) Honorary Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(4) Participated in Intercollegiate Athletics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(5) Participated in Intramural Athletics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(6) Attended SHSU athletic events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(7) Service Clubs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(8) Student Government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(9) Social Action/Political	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(10) Theatre/Dance/Music and Art	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(11) Religious Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(12) Recreation Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(13) Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

_____

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4. Based on your life experiences since graduation, how important do you consider your educational experience at SHSU? (Check one)

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ Unimportant

5. In each of the following areas, how well did your education at SHSU prepare you for your present situation?

	Not applicable	Not prepared	Somewhat prepared	Well prepared
Verbal communication	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written communication	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public speaking	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social interaction	☐	☐	☐	☐
Computer literacy	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural awareness	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organizational skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mathematical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reading skills	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Regardless of whether you are attending another educational institution at this time, what is the *highest* degree you eventually intend to complete? (Check one)

- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Professional degree (includes *only* dentistry, medicine, optometry, osteopathy, podiatry, veterinary medicine, law, and theology)
- ☐ Doctor's degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., D.B.A.)

7. Did you complete an internship as part of your undergraduate degree requirements?

- ☐ Yes *(Please continue to question 8.)*
- ☐ No *(Please go directly to Section 2.)*

8. Which of the following best identifies the type of field placement in which you served your internship?

- ☐ Federal Law Enforcement
- ☐ State Law Enforcement
- ☐ Local Law Enforcement
- ☐ Federal Corrections
- ☐ State Corrections
- ☐ Local Corrections
- ☐ Federal Probation/Parole
- ☐ State Probation/Parole
- ☐ Local Probation/Parole
- ☐ Other _____

9. How important was the internship in your educational experience?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ Unimportant

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Section 2

The next few questions deal with your employment experiences.

1. How long after graduation did it take you to find your first job?

- ☐ I had the job before graduation
- ☐ 1-90 days
- ☐ 91-180 days
- ☐ 181 days-1 year
- ☐ Over 1 year
- ☐ I have been unable to find any job (Skip to Section 3 and continue)

2. Did you learn of your first job through an internship?

- ☐ Yes (please continue to question 3)
- ☐ No (please skip to question 6)

3. When were you hired to your first job?

- ☐ Immediately after the internship
- ☐ Within 3 months of the internship
- ☐ 3 to 6 months after the internship
- ☐ More than six months after the internship

4. Were you hired by the agency where you served your internship?

- ☐ Yes (please skip to question 7)
- ☐ No (please continue to question 5)

5. Do you believe that your internship experience helped you in finding your first job?

- ☐ Yes (please skip to question 7)
- ☐ No (please skip to question 7)

6. How did you learn of your first job? (Please check primary source)

- ☐ Was already working in it
- ☐ Cooperative education program
- ☐ College placement office
- ☐ Placement office of a professional organization
- ☐ Public or private employment agency
- ☐ Newspaper advertisement
- ☐ Direct contact with employer
- ☐ Faculty contact or referral
- ☐ Contact through friend or relative
- ☐ Other (please specify)

_____

7. How well do you feel the criminal justice program at SHSU prepared you for your first job?

- ☐ Excellent preparation
- ☐ Good preparation
- ☐ Fair preparation
- ☐ Poor preparation

Comment: _____

8. Is your current job your first job after graduation?

- ☐ Yes *(Skip to question 10 and continue)*
- ☐ No *(Please answer question 9 next)*

9. How did you learn of your current job?

- ☐ Was already working in it
- ☐ Cooperative education program
- ☐ College placement office
- ☐ Placement office of a professional organization
- ☐ Public or private employment agency
- ☐ Newspaper advertisement
- ☐ Direct contact with employer
- ☐ Faculty contact or referral
- ☐ Contact through friend or relative
- ☐ Other (please specify)

_____

10. To what extent is your current job related to your study of criminal justice at SHSU? (Please check one)

- ☐ Not related *(Please continue to question 11)*
- ☐ Somewhat related *(Skip to question 12 and continue)*
- ☐ Directly related *(Skip to question 12 and continue)*

11. If you are not currently working in a job related to criminal justice, which of the following applies?

- ☐ I never looked for work related to criminal justice
- ☐ I looked for work related to criminal justice but could not find any
- ☐ I found work related to criminal justice but the pay was too low
- ☐ I chose a job unrelated to criminal justice for other reasons

_____
(please specify)

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12. What is your current employment status? (Please check one)

- ☐ Employed full-time (35 hours or more per week)
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Not employed, but currently seeking a job
- ☐ Not employed, and not seeking a job
- ☐ Full-time student

13. What is your current annual salary before deductions? (Please check one)

- ☐ Less than $5,000 per year
- ☐ $5,000 to $9,999 per year
- ☐ $10,000 to $14,999
- ☐ $15,000 to $19,999
- ☐ $20,000 to $24,999
- ☐ $25,000 to $29,999
- ☐ $30,000 to $34,999
- ☐ $35,000 to $39,999
- ☐ $40,000 to $44,999
- ☐ $45,000 to $49,999
- ☐ $50,000 and above

14. What service(s), not available to you while you were attending SHSU, would have better prepared you for your present circumstances?

Section 3

Next, we have a few questions about your contact with SHSU since graduation.

1. Are you a member of the University Alumni Association?

☐ Yes, a life member
☐ Yes, an annual member
☐ No, but used to be
☐ No, never was

2. If you are a member, did you purchase your own membership or was it a gift?

☐ Not a member ☐ Purchased for myself ☐ Gift

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the series of statements below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Alumni Association is oriented toward people older than myself	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would enjoy having more personal contact with SHSU than I have today	☐	☐	☐	☐
There have been times when I did not give money to SHSU because I felt the amount I had in mind would not make any difference	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'd feel better about donating to SHSU if I received an account of how my gift was spent	☐	☐	☐	☐
While I enjoyed my time at SHSU it is now in the past and I really have no desire to maintain much contact	☐	☐	☐	☐
The University is well enough endowed that it doesn't need a donation from me	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I had my life to do all over again I'd still go to Sam Houston State University	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attending SHSU has had a major positive impact on the development of my career	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel SHSU is more interested in its highly successful professional graduates than in those who are in less prominent and lower paying careers	☐	☐	☐	☐

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4. How informed are you about current SHSU events and programs? (check one)

- ☐ Very informed
- ☐ Somewhat informed
- ☐ Not informed
- ☐ Not interested

5. What is the primary source of your information about current SHSU events? (check one)

- ☐ Alumni Newsletter
- ☐ University Publications
- ☐ Current Students
- ☐ Fellow Alumni
- ☐ Faculty/Staff members
- ☐ Other _____ (please specify)
- ☐ No sources

6. How often do you participate in alumni events? (check one)

- ☐ At least once a month
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Maybe once a year (e.g., Homecoming)
- ☐ Once every few years
- ☐ Never

7. When was the last time you visited the University? (check one)

- ☐ Within the last six months
- ☐ Six to 12 months ago
- ☐ One to two years ago
- ☐ More than two years ago
- ☐ Have not returned since graduating

8. Have you received a follow-up letter, call, or questionnaire from any of the following organizations since you graduated? (check all that apply)

- ☐ The College of Criminal Justice
- ☐ The Office of the Dean of Student Life
- ☐ The Alumni Association
- ☐ Other _____ (please specify)
- ☐ None received

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Section 4

Finally, we would like to ask you a few demographic questions.

1. Gender: (Please check one)

   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

2. Age: (Please check one)

   - ☐ Under 20 years
   - ☐ 20-24 years
   - ☐ 25-34 years
   - ☐ 35-44 years
   - ☐ 45-54 years
   - ☐ 55 years and over

3. Marital Status: (Please check one)

   - ☐ Single
   - ☐ Married

4. Race/Ethnic Identification: (Please check one)

   - ☐ American Indian
   - ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
   - ☐ African-American
   - ☐ Hispanic
   - ☐ Caucasian

5. Where do you live now? (Please check one)

   - ☐ East Texas
   - ☐ Central Texas
   - ☐ West Texas
   - ☐ South Texas
   - ☐ North Texas/ Panhandle
   - ☐ Other state/ Abroad: _____
     (please specify)

6. Please list all degrees completed including the degree you received at SHSU.

Degree Completed	Major	Name of Institution	Dates Attended

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